

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 13-223—SB 921**

*Judiciary Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY A  
DOG**

**SUMMARY:** By law, a dog's owner or keeper is liable when the dog hurts a person or damages property, unless the person was trespassing; committing a tort; or teasing, tormenting, or abusing the dog. This act specifies that domesticated dogs and cats ("companion animals") are included in the definition of "property" for which an offending dog's owner or keeper is liable for damages. When a companion animal is affected, the act specifies that allowable damages include veterinary care expenses, the animal's fair market value, and burial expenses, when applicable.

The act also permits owners of certain animals (sheep, goats, horses, hogs, cattle, poultry, or domestic rabbits) to recover veterinary care and burial expenses when their properly confined or enclosed animals are injured or killed by dogs. They could already recover the animal's value. By law, the chief municipal officer or agent and affected owner estimate the amount of damages. If they cannot agree, they must appoint a disinterested third party to help with the estimation.

The act also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

OLR Tracking: JO:KLM:TA:ts